

OUT OF TIME

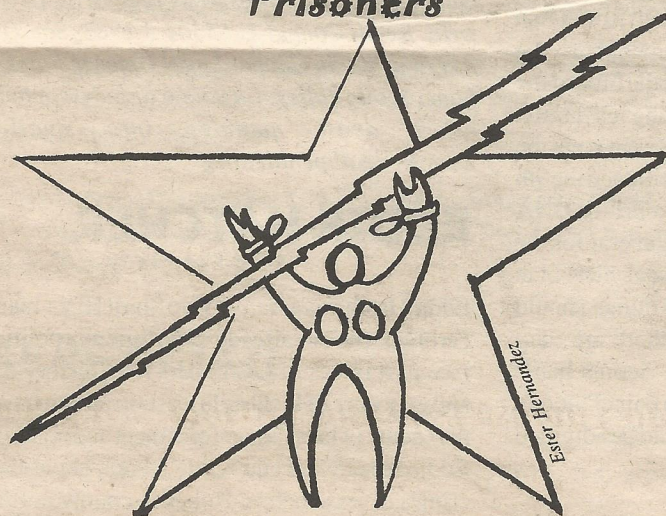
Issue No. 54

Out of Control--Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners

Sept 2000

Sparks Fly! - 11

Eleventh Annual International Day of Solidarity With Women Political Prisoners



an evening of culture and politics to support women political prisoners featuring:

Rhodessa Jones and the Medea Project

performance artist, writer, artistic director of the Medea Project, Theatre for Incarcerated Women

Faith Nolan

singer and song writer

Laura Whitehorn

former political prisoner released 1999 after 14 years

Saturday, November 4, 2000

7:30 p.m.

San Francisco Women's Building

3543 18th St. (btw Valencia & Guerrero)

NOTES FROM AN ITALIAN PRISON

A year ago Silvia Baraldini was returned to her homeland, Italy. After 17 years in US federal prisons, and a ten year fight for repatriation, she now resides in a High Security Unit at Ribibbia Prison, Rome. Silvia's access to visitors is limited and educational programs are scarce. Silvia has been allowed, once, to visit her mother who is in the hospital. This would not have been allowed in the u.s. She would appreciate hearing from people. Write: **Silvia Baraldini, Via Bartolo Longo 92, 00156 Roma ITALY**

May 31, 2000 "...a strike erupted here against the beatings that were inflicted on prisoners in a prison on the island of Sardinia. {This happened the night the 82 guards who were investigated were released} The largest unit erupted and destroyed everything in sight. This is the unit where those awaiting trials, the addicts and the HIV positive women live in medieval conditions, with no hot water, five to a cell and the toilet in the cell, the same space where they eat, cook and wash. I saw the unit once and felt like the walls were closing in on me. I am not surprised they tried to destroy it...

Over the next two days the rest of the prison joined in. Nine demands were formulated, tactics decided upon and all was proceeding in an orderly manner when the Warden panicked. A COINTELPRO type situation was set up where the non strikers accused the strikers of physical threats in front of the national director of the prisons. The next day we were invaded by guards brought in from different prisons. No one could move, the prison was shut down and the women in High Security Unit were prevented from meeting with the others. Two days later the other sections called off the strike.

I was particularly targeted as a ringleader even though I have little contact with the rest of the prison. This received much coverage in the press because there is a looming crisis within the prisons due to over population and a selective application of benefits including work release. It's also true that only very poor people go to prison in Italy and this class contradiction has been aggravated by the immigration that has also swelled the prison population..." Peace, Silvia

THANKS! Out of Control would like to wholeheartedly thank Rhoda Collins & Sonja DeVries, the producers of *OUT: The Making of a Revolutionary*, who gave us a generous donation. The movie is about Laura Whitehorn and premiered at the Castro Theater, S.F. in June, as a benefit for several groups doing prison work. Also much gratitude to Max Airborne for the layout of this issue.

"SHOW TRIAL"

Despite the Peruvian Supreme Military Court's admission of error in its initial conviction of Lori Berenson on grounds of treason and aggravated terrorism and despite its nullification of her life sentence, all four papers in Peru, along with radio and TV broadcasts, continue to prejudice Lori by referring to her as a terrorist and discussing what her next sentence might be WHEN she is convicted, not IF she is convicted. The pre-trial activities are proceeding in ways that will only hurt Peru and further isolate that country in the community of nations for its continued violations of fundamental human rights. Already, there have been several violations of Article 8 of the American Convention on Human Rights. Given these violations of due process, Lori plans to remain silent in accordance with the same Article 8.

In January of this year, Lori stated, "In the face of injustice, to be silent is to be an accomplice. We will not be silent, we will not be quiet, until this changes, until there is justice and respect for human rights in Peru." The u.s. government should be actively pursuing the release of Lori who has been wrongfully incarcerated by

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EASTBAY SCREENING of "OUT: the Making of a Revolutionary" dirs Sonja de Vries & Rhonda Collins
USA 2000
Sunday November 12 6pm
Fine Arts Theater, 2451 Shattuck at Haste
5 blx South of Berkeley BART

.....
Part of the 2-day "La Lesbian" film festival.
Call (510)654-6346 for a full brochure of all the films and performance events. website address is www.lapena.org
info up after Oct 1st.
.....

the government of Peru for over 4 years. We shouldn't forget that members of the Tupac Amaru and other Peruvians have faced similar horrific treatment by the government for years without much attention. The u.s. should not be supporting the corrupt dictatorship in Peru in any way. Please call the **White House hot line at 202-456-1111**. For more info, check **www.freelori.org** or write **Committee to Free Lori Berenson, 110 Maryland Ave. NE #102, Washington DC 20002**



Out of Time
c/o Out of Control Lesbian Committee
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San Francisco, CA 94110
e-mail: outoftime@igc.org

Committing to Conscience: Building a Unified Strategy to end the Death Penalty

The largest anti-death penalty conference ever.
In San Francisco, on Nov. 16-19.

For info: call 1-888-2-ABOLISH or e-mail:
unity@deathpenalty.org or check the conference
website: www.deathpenalty.org

FINAL WORDS

Excerpts from the last statement of Shaka Sankofa, murdered by the state of Texas in June, 2000. He was an activist against the death penalty and fought to the very end, even struggling with the guards when they came to get him.

I would like to say that I did not kill Bobby Lambert. That I'm an innocent black man that is being murdered. This is a lynching that is happening in America tonight. There's overwhelming and compelling evidence of my defense that has never been heard in any court of America. What is happening here is an outrage for any civilized country to anybody anywhere to look at. What's happening here is wrong.

I want to express my sincere thanks to all of y'all. We must continue to move forward and do everything we can to outlaw legal lynching in America. We must continue to stay strong all around the world, and people must come together to stop the systematic killing of poor and innocent black people. We must continue to stand together in unity and to demand a moratorium on all executions. What is here is just a lynching that is taking place. But they're going to keep on lynching us for the next 100 years, if you do not carry on that tradition, and that period of resistance. ...make sure that the state does not get my body. Make sure that we get my name as Shaka Sankofa. My name is not Gary Graham. Make sure that it is properly presented on my grave. Shaka Sankofa.

I died fighting for what I believe in. I died fighting for what was just and what was right. I did not kill Bobby

Lambert, and the truth is going to come out ... make the public exposed to the genocide and this brutality...and let the world see what is really happening here behind closed doors. Let the world see the barbarity and injustice of what is really happening here.

We will prevail. We will keep marching. Keep marching black people, black power. Keep marching black people, black power. Keep marching black people. They are killing me tonight. They are murdering me tonight.

Execution Pending

Kevin Cooper, a Black man, has been on death row at San Quentin for 15+ years for the murder of his neighbors. An 8 yr. old child who was hiding in the house at the time of the murders said it was a white man he saw killing his family. This child is now 23 and still maintains that Kevin is not the murderer. In late 1998, Kevin's attorneys petitioned the 9th federal circuit and the California supreme court for DNA testing on 53 new items of evidence. Atty general for the state, dan lockyer, responded with the usual blah blah about enough time has gone by that these things should have been resolved long ago. However, there are very serious questions about blond hair in the victims hand, missing photos of this blond hair, and even a pair of bloody overalls that were destroyed before they could be admitted as key evidence.

One of the things that's wrong is that poor people accused of capital crimes are often defended by lawyers who lack the skills, resources and commitment to handle serious matters. It isn't really the details of the crime that determines who gets the death penalty; it is simply the quality of the representation. A large part of death row population is made up of people who are distinguished by neither their records nor the circumstances of their crimes, but by their abject poverty, mental impairments, minimal education and the very poor legal representation they had at the time of trial. There is totally inadequate funding for the indigent defendant. Fees paid to public defenders are so low that lawyers can make more money doing almost anything else. No poor person accused of any crime should receive the sort of representation that is found acceptable in the courts of this country; and it is particularly horrible where the life of the defendant is at stake. We can not let this lousy excuse

for justice continue. We must end the death penalty NOW!!

Kevin Cooper came within 5 days of execution because his court appointed appellate lawyers failed to prepare petitions to halt the execution. One of them even admitted that he had not read the files because he was too busy with other work. The California Appellate Project stepped in and filed the required documents.

Kevin Cooper has worked hard to educate himself in his years on death row and has written some insightful pieces about his experiences. He is a long time reader of Out of Time and writes to us regularly. To learn more, write Kevin Cooper, C-65304 3-E-82, San Quentin, Ca 94974 or Kevin Cooper Legal Defense Fund, 8 Suzanne Lane, Scotts Valley, Ca 95066 or jody@activist-etc.org. other death penalty info available at: www.nodeathpenalty.org

EDDIE HATCHER

Eddie Hatcher is a Native Two Spirit HIV+ man from north carolina who has already done time as a political prisoner (see past issues of OOT). His long history of resistance and exposure of local political corruption have made him the enemy of local law enforcement and politicians. In fact, Eddie researched and wrote a book about the times and crimes of jesse helms. Robeson county north carolina is known far and wide for its drug trafficking and corrupt police and so called justice system.

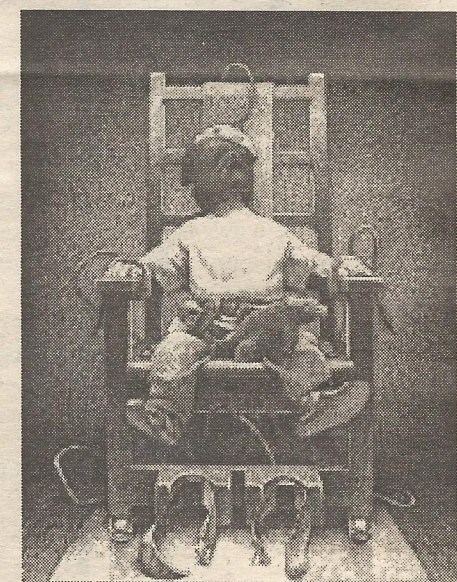
Eddie has been in prison for more than a year now on a homicide charge for which the prosecutor is seeking the death penalty. Evidence in the case is clearly tainted and in some instances very inconclusive. He is finally scheduled for a Sept 18 hearing. His fear is that the prosecution will try for a change of venue to an even more racist (read kkk) county. Eddie is defending himself and has also been compiling facts about north carolina and the death penalty.

To learn more and lend your support, please contact: Eddie Hatcher Defense Committee, PO Box 2702, Pembroke, NC 28372 or www.eddiehatcher.org or write Eddie, 122 Legend Rd. Lumberton, NC 28358

- ALL major international human rights treaties expressly prohibit the execution of persons younger than 18
- 160 children have been sentenced to death in the u.s. since 1973
- u.s. supreme court has ruled that the execution of children as young as 16 is not "cruel & unusual"
- 2 out of 3 children sent to death row are children of color
- of the 9 girls executed in u.s. history, 8 were Black and 1 was Native
- nearly 90% of people executed were convicted of killing whites
- since 1990, only 6 countries have executed children. they are Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran and the u.s. Amerikkka has executed more children than ANY other country
- people of color make up over 1/2 of all homicide victims in the u.s.
- 60% of death row prisoners in california and texas are either Black, Latino or Native
- 90% of people the government tries to execute are Black or Latino

Stats are taken from www.ncadp.org

america's shame



Stop Killing Kids.

OUT OF TIME



**FREE LEONARD
PELTIER!
CALL THE WHITE HOUSE
Every Week: 202/456-1111
ASK FOR CLEMENCY
NOW!**

All court appeals for Leonard's case have been lost, and a Clemency Petition to President Clinton, filed 6 years ago, still awaits his signature. It expires if President Clinton does not sign it by January 20th, before he leaves office.

Contact your Congressperson and Senators and inform them about the case of Leonard Peltier because they have been lobbied by the FBI, and need to hear truth from Leonard's supporters.

**Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, P.O. Box 583, Lawrence KS 66044,
785-842-5774 or lpdcc@idir.net or www.freepeltier.org. Bay Area Leonard
Peltier Support Group, 415-648-8472**

MOTHERS IN JAIL

Increasing numbers of women are being criminalized in the u.s. Since 1980, there has been a 275% increase in women in prison and that figure may grow as women are forced off welfare benefits without any safety net or viable economic alternatives. In California, the number of women in prison has increased from 1,000 in 1980 to 11,000 in 1998. 56.9% are women of color.

- 75% of women are in prison for nonviolent crimes like prostitution or theft; crimes of poverty
- 80% of women report pre-prison incomes of less than \$2000/year and 92% report incomes under \$10,000/year.
- women sent to prison can lose custody of their children after 6 months if the children are under 3.
- 85% of women in prison in California are mothers
- 17,000 children in California have mothers in prison, nationally there are 167,000 children with mothers in prison.
- mothers in prison who are not u.s. citizens are often deported after serving their sentences and are permanently separated from their children who are citizens.

Some groups to contact for support, info or to get involved: **The Action Working Group of the Southern California Seeking Justice Network at 323-860-8856 (compiled these stats), The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, 714 W. California Blvd. Pasadena, CA 91105, WOMENCARE, Inc. 236 E. 27th St. New York, NY 10001, or Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, 1535 Mission St. San Francisco, CA 94103.**

The Great State of Texas

The state of Texas, under the leadership of Governor George W. Bush, is ranked:

- 50th in spending for teachers' salaries
- 49th in spending on the environment
- 48th in per-capita funding for public health
- 47th in delivery of social services
- 42nd in child-support collections
- 41st in per-capita spending on public education. And

- 5th in percentage of population living in poverty
- 1st in air and water pollution
- 1st in percentage of poor working parents without insurance
- 1st in percentage of children without health insurance
- 1st in executions (avg. 1 every 2 weeks for Bush's 5 years)

Just think of what he could do for the country if he were president!!!

Marilyn Graduated

Marilyn Buck is a North American anti-imperialist political prisoner currently at FCI Dublin in California. She has been inside since 1985 with an 80 year total sentence and little chance of parole. The harshness of her sentence was due to her active support of the Black Liberation Army and other liberation struggles. Marilyn is also an artist and a poet. A few years ago, the Friends of Marilyn Buck Committee held a raffle of one of her sculptures to raise money for her to take courses towards a degree. It was a lot of hard work in an unfriendly and unsupportive atmosphere, but last spring, she received her degree in psychology from New College in S.F. The Committee is also trying to put together a chap book of Marilyn's poems. If anyone knows of a small publishing company that might be interested, you can write c/o Out of Control.

TERMS

*For Alicia and all
Political Prisoners and Prisoners of war*

*a news article says
Alicia Rodriguez
is viewed as
a political prisoner
and a freedom fighter
but classified
as a terrorist*

*perhaps people should
view more
and classify less*

Marilyn Buck May 2000



SARA JANE OLSON TARGETED

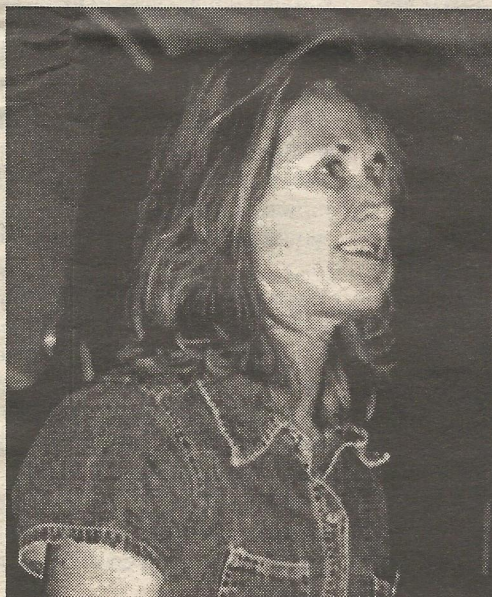
Sara Jane Olson (AKA Kathleen Soliah), is being persecuted and prosecuted by the state of California. In the summer of 1999, Sara was arrested in St. Paul, Minnesota where she has lived since 1978. She was charged with conspiracy to plant pipe bombs under L.A.P.D. police cars in 1975. The bombs were allegedly in retaliation for an L.A. police massacre in which six members of the radical Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) were incinerated in a Black neighborhood in Compton, California. Although the bombs never detonated, Sara is being charged with attempted murder and is facing a life sentence if convicted.

Recognizing the significance of this case, the Peace & Justice Commission of the Berkeley City Council initiated a resolution which calls upon the state of California to dismiss all charges against Sara, citing the way in which conspiracy laws in this country have always been used

against political activists and people of color. In response to this positive effort, the anti-Olson forces associated with the police have organized a national e-mail campaign against the resolution, indicating that Sara's case is being used to further a larger right-wing political agenda scapegoating one woman.

Email the Berkeley Council's swing votes asking that they support this important resolution.
maio@ci.berkeley.ca.us;
olds@ci.berkeley.ca.us;
spring@ci.berkeley.ca.us;
woolley@ci.berkeley.ca.us

For information call: 510/594-4088 or
www.saraolsondefense.org 415/255-7036
ext. 4



IN HANDCUFFS, SMILING

(c) Susie Day, 2000

Here is the story of a highly strange girl — for “girl” is how she secretly thought of herself, even into her 40s; it was other people who thought of her as strange. Anyway, this highly strange girl, she fell in love with a prisoner. Anyone will tell you this is a bad idea. It gets worse.

She fell in love with a lesbian prisoner. A lesbian political prisoner. A leftist lesbian political prisoner, who, along with two men and three other women, was facing over 70 years behind bars for a series of property bombings, among them the 1983 bombing of the Capitol building in protest of the U.S. invasion of Grenada. This highly strange girl... Oh what the hell, it was me.

I first heard about the case in 1988. The targets the group was accused of bombing were, from the point of view of a '70s lesbian such as myself, fairly well chosen. They included the Police Benevolent Association after the police shooting of African American grandmother, Eleanor Bumpurs, and the apartheid-era South African Consulate, along with our friend, the Capitol building. No one was killed or even slightly injured in the blasts. The Capitol's Republican Cloak Room was damaged, and Teddy Roosevelt's bust busted. Small injuries, compared to the overthrow of a sovereign country.

The indicted prisoners, I noticed, were educated, middle class, white people. What the hell were they thinking, I wondered. Didn't they know they were throwing away their lives? Wasn't taking up arms a tactical disaster, almost sure to hurt the innocent while giving the government another incentive to upgrade its firepower? Yes. But. Given the delusion of Democracy in this country, anything that broke the anesthetic grip of MacNeil/Lehrer was a relief.

I agreed with them; I disagreed with them. I needed to know who they were. A newspaper wanted a story on the four women in the case. I read attorneys' briefs and political pamphlets. I studied the defendants' photos. They all seemed modulated, intelligent people, yet because of their anti-government stance, they had drawn inordinate sentences from previous charges. Susan Rosenberg, for instance, was already carrying a sentence of 58 years for explosives possession. Linda Evans incurred 45 years for giving a false ID to purchase legal guns. Then there was Laura Whitehorn, unconvicted, who at that point had spent more jail time — almost four years — without bail than any prisoner in U.S. history. I looked at Laura's photo. She was wearing a kafiya and smiling, her fist in the air. “She looks so bossy,” I thought. I went to Washington, DC to interview the four women.

The DC Jail was noise and grime and a brutal hopelessness, permeated by fluorescent lighting and the omnipresence of guards. The prisoners — 95% Black — wore jumpsuits. One by one, Susan Rosenberg, then

Marilyn Buck, then Linda Evans were brought into the glass-walled cubicle, where I interviewed them.

Then a small, grey-haired woman with deep brown eyes was led in in handcuffs, carrying a stack of legal papers. She grinned and offered me a roll of “Silence = Death” stickers. As we talked, I was startled to find that I was quietly, perversely, becoming happy. It was another day before I figured out that I had a large crush on Laura Whitehorn.

I was euphoric and deeply shocked when the feeling became mutual. Soon, we realized we loved each other. Laura's bail never happened, but a plea bargain did. Laura was finally sentenced — the maximum of 23 years — and transferred to the Lexington, Kentucky women's prison.

So began for me years of the low-grade terror that comes with loving someone who is in constant danger. In prison, Laura, like her codefendants, had virtually relinquished the “white skin privilege” that allows most Caucasians to be treated as human beings. Like her Black and Latina friends in the general prison population, she could be beaten up, or put in “the hole,” for various infractions. Like other political prisoners, Laura could at any time be confined to a sensory deprivation unit. She could die of bad medical care. Once, on a summer afternoon in the first year of our love, I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was moving, flying through a blackness to reach someone I loved the most. Such lift, such hope: Only to find myself face to face with a skull.

Then there were our political fights. How could I be in this relationship without signing on as a Revolutionary? Why did I criticize armed struggle? “I would die for my principles,” Laura said during one of our arguments. “And I would die for my right to remain ambivalent,” I retorted.

We talked on the phone, but only when Laura called me; it's impossible to call a prisoner. We visited, but only when I had the money to go to Kentucky; later, California. I must have seemed to her cloying and demanding, always wanting to talk about “feelings.” Our conversations were suffused with misunderstanding, longing, anger. Always, they were monitored by guards or agents.

I hated myself for being “codependent” enough to love a prisoner. I wondered if I was crazy. Friends and therapists

told me in one way or another: This hurts too much. She's using you. Let her go. She would want you to be happy. Laura herself told me to see other people. But how could I, when I loved her so much? I must have acted weird and jerky. I must have treated friends badly. Certainly, I lost friends.

Finally — you knew it was coming, didn't you? — Laura and I did the sensible thing. We broke up. We went on with our lives.

But you know what? Stupidly, masochistically, wonderfully, we got back together. And last August, after 14 years and 3 months of incarceration, Laura Jane Whitehorn, having served her time, walked out of prison.

Not that the advice wasn't sound; not that my friends didn't care; not that I don't still think she can be bossy and we don't still fight about politics. But Laura and I are still together and, last time I checked (about one second ago), we plan to be for the rest of our lives.

You see, there are things beyond prison. I would have known Laura anywhere. She just happened to come to me in handcuffs, smiling. She is the only person in the world who has meant the sun to me. I will spend the rest of my life being grateful and happy that she is out.

Because so many similar stories don't end this way, I want to dedicate this one to anyone who's loved impossibly. To anyone who continues to love through death and disease and difference and distance and all the extravagant barricades — including prison — that life can put up. And to the women and men behind bars whom I know or have yet to know — to Susan and Marilyn and Linda who remain in prison — please hang on. Love is as tangible as the body, you know, regardless of where our bodies are.

The graphic on this page is by Bernard Patrick, a faithful correspondent of OOC and a great artist who generously and often donates his art to us. Bernard is a prisoner in the Georgia State Prison at Reidsville. We thank him very much.

